

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 4, 2022

Hon. Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Hon. Lloyd Austin
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretaries Austin and Blinken,

We strongly urge you to reject the recent Turkish proposal to purchase Block 70 F-16s and mechanical upgrades from the United States to modernize its air force. Approving this proposal would reward President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan for ignoring both Turkey's alliance commitments to the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the vast human rights abuses his regime continues to commit at home and abroad.

In November, Turkey requested 40 Block 70 F-16 fighter jets and 80 modernization kits for their current fleet from the U.S. The request comes after the Erdoğan regime has repeatedly used its military power to destabilize the Eastern Mediterranean, Middle East, South Caucasus, and North Africa for years. Turkish and Turkish-backed forces have utilized American-made weaponry and components during these incursions to commit war crimes, including purposefully bombing civilian targets like hospitals and schools in Iraq, Syria, and Nagorno Karabakh.


The purchase of advanced fighter jets from the United States for Turkey's military arsenal will not incentivize Erdoğan to change course and become a good actor. It will more likely lead to further death and destruction in the region at the hands of his military. Turkey also continues to utilize S-400 missile defense systems, which potentially exposes important tactical information about U.S. weaponry and military operations to Russia. While this is antithetical to their commitments as a NATO ally and jeopardizes American national security, Erdoğan uses this tactic consistently to pit the U.S. and Russia against each other to achieve his desired goals.

At home, the Erdoğan regime also continues to promote unfair elections, suppress civil society, and abuse human rights to maintain its grip on power. Just last week, a Turkish journalist was arrested for reportedly insulting Erdoğan, a common occurrence under this repressive government that does not respect freedom of speech or the press.

We strongly urge you to reject Turkey's request for new F-16s and modernization kits and take immediate action to hold the Erdoğan regime accountable. The United States must not provide any further support to Turkey's military until President Erdoğan takes tangible steps to halt his destabilizing actions and violations of international law at home and abroad. Precedent shows that he will not change his behavior until the United States uses all its diplomatic tools, including targeted economic sanctions.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns, and we look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,


FRANK PALLONE, JR.
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
CHRIS PAPPAS
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
DAVID G. VALADAO
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
JAMES P. MCGOVERN
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
TONY CÀRDENAS
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
BRAD SHERMAN
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
JOHN SARBANES
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
TED DEUTCH
Member of Congress


GUS M. BILIRAKIS
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
NICOLE MALLIOTAKIS
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
JACKIE SPEIER
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
ADAM B. SCHIFF
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
DAVID N. CICILLINE
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
ANNA G. ESHOO
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
GRACE F. NAPOLITANO
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
ALBIO SIRES
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
DINA TITUS
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
MARIO DIAZ-BALART
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
LOUIE GOHMERT
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
JUDY CHU
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
RAJA KRISHNAMOORTHY
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
LINDA T. SANCHEZ
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
RO KHANNA
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
KATHERINE CLARK
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
JOSH GOTTHEIMER
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
KATHY MANNING
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
JAKE AUCHINCLOSS
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
JIMMY GOMEZ
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
ZOE LOFGREN
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
GRACE MENG
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
BARBARA LEE
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
KATIE PORTER
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
JIM COSTA
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
JAN SCHAKOWSKY
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
RAÚL M. GRIJALVA
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
BRADLEY S. SCHNEIDER
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
CHELLIE PINGREE
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
ALAN LOWENTHAL
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
PETER WELCH
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
DANNY K. DAVIS
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
JAIME RASKIN
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
SUSAN WILD
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
THOMAS R. SUOZZI
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
LORI TRAHAN
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
MARK POCAN
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
BOBBY RUSH
Member of Congress

_____/s/_____
BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN
Member of Congress